



## FTA's State Safety Oversight

Changes are underway to the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) State Safety Oversight (SSO) program. The SSO is a set of rules that govern the collaboration between FTA, other federal agencies, states, and rail transit agencies to ensure the safety and security of rail transit systems. The SSO has been a focus of safety and security procedures for the rail transit industry since the 1990's.

In 1991, the Congress passed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) which required FTA to establish a state-managed safety and security oversight program for rail transit agencies. The rules for the SSO were first published in 1995 and the primary focus was improved safety and security for the rail transit industry. Primarily, each state was to designate an agency that would be tasked with oversight of the rail transit systems in that state and would require safety plans by 1997 and security plans by 1998.

Ten years later, the FTA published a revision to the SSO in April 2005. The new FTA rules required that states comply with changes by May 1, 2006. The major thrust of the changes dealt with the need for "proficiency and efficiency testing;" a process to ensure and verify that rail transit agencies were following safe and secure operating proce-

... "Rail Transit: Additional Federal Leadership Would Enhance FTA's State Safety Oversight Program." The report addressed three main areas: 1) how the SSO program is designed; 2) what is known about the program's impact; and 3) challenges facing the program.

dures. The new rule also emphasized rail transit security and emergency preparedness. Many of the changes in the new rule are in response to investigations and recommendations by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

In addition to the NTSB and FTA, the community of federal, state and local agencies involved in rail transit safety and security oversight is growing. This list of agencies now involved in rail transit safety and security include the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), many state, and local agencies.

In July 2006, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report entitled "Rail Transit: Additional Federal Leadership Would Enhance FTA's State Safety Oversight Program." The report addressed three main areas: 1) how the SSO program is designed; 2) what is known about the program's

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# Notes from the Top

*by Carol Cranshaw*

For entirely too long, our PT section has been in a state of flux because of too much work and the lack of an administrative assistant, the only clerical support we have. We are happy to announce that you will be greeted by a new voice – that of Ellen Baldrige. Ellen has over 9 years of experience with the State and we are very pleased that she has joined our staff. All of you attending the conference this month will get a chance to meet and welcome Ellen to the world of public transit.



The Annual Public Transportation Conference is just weeks away and we are all excited about the agenda and attendance. The conference will be held at the Wyndham Hotel in New Orleans September 25-27. It will be an excellent opportunity to catch up with all of your colleagues and learn about the latest federal and state issues. If you have not yet registered, see the information in the back of this newsletter or visit our website.

Like many of our counterparts across the nation, the PT section has been working with FTA to update our State Rail Safety Oversight (SSO) standard. The FTA's SSO is the guidebook for federal, state and local officials to collaborate on rail transit safety and security issues. The PT section is also assisting NORTA with their plan update, also required by the new federal rules. Additionally, the DOTD has a Bus Safety and Security Standard that has been in place now for several

months. As you know, we held several workshops on System Safety Plan development and we are now receiving Bus Transit System's Safety Plans for review. If you have not forwarded your Plan to us, please do so at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your continued support of public transit and we look forward to seeing you at our conference. 🇺🇸

## Announcements

# 2006 Annual Louisiana Public Transit Conference

September 25-27, 2006  
Wyndham New Orleans @ Canal Place

*Come join us in a celebration of transit in Louisiana.*

## Events Calendar

### APTA Conferences

Annual Meeting

October 8-11, 2006 San Jose, CA

Bus Technical, Maintenance &  
Procurement Workshop

November 14-17, 2006 Pittsburg, PA

Transit CEOs Seminar

January 27-30, 2007 Tempe, AZ

Legal Affairs Seminar

February 4-6, 2007 Charleston, SC

TransITech

February 13-15, 2007 New Orleans, LA

For more information: [www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com)

### Other Upcoming Conferences/Training:

SWTA 2006 Transit & Paratransit

Management Certification Program

October 16-20, 2006 Austin, TX

November 13-17, 2006 Austin, TX

TRB 17th National Rural Public and  
Intercity Bus Transportation Conference

October 22-25, 2006 Stevenson, WA

For more information: [www.trb.org](http://www.trb.org)

SWTA Transit Association

2006 Transit Marketing Seminar &  
Spotlight Awards

November 5-7, 2006 Corpus Christi, TX

SWTA Transit Association

27th Annual Conference & EXPO

February 11-13, 2007 Austin, TX

### **Louisiana 18th Annual**

### **Public Transit Conference - 2006**

September 25-27, 2006 New Orleans, LA

Wyndham New Orleans @ Canal Place

For more information, see the  
announcement at the end of this  
newsletter or go to:

[http://www.dotd.louisiana.gov/  
intermodal/transit/](http://www.dotd.louisiana.gov/intermodal/transit/)

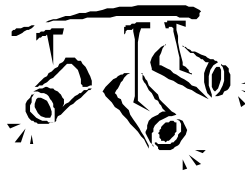
### NTI Courses:

For information: [www.ntionline.com](http://www.ntionline.com)

### Transportation Safety Institute Classes

Courses are offered around the country  
on various topics throughout the year.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.tsi.dot.gov](http://www.tsi.dot.gov)



Spotlight on...

## 2006 Annual Louisiana Public Transit Conference

Every year (well... almost every year) transit professionals from across Louisiana gather together for the Annual Transit Conference. Participants learn about new federal regulations, share ideas, extol the benefits of transit, lament the hardships of providing transit, swap stories, and generally celebrate the rewards of a career dedicated to public transportation.

The 2006 conference will be no different than most years except that this year's conference will also provide a small, but needed, boost to one of our state's most treasured assets - the Big Easy. Two years ago in 2004, the conference was held in New Orleans and enjoyed one of the largest crowds ever. Last year's conference was scheduled to take place in New Orleans but was cancelled due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.

This year's conference promises to be a memorable event. With the advent of the new national transportation bill, there are new federal programs (and requirements) to learn about and many of our federal partners have plans to attend. Many of you expressed your approval of the access afforded by the 'Breakfast with Bob' event that featured one-on-one time with Bob Patrick, Director of the FTA Region VI office. We heard your wishes and, barring any unforeseen events, Bob will be there.


Katrina and the lessons we are still learning from that event will be featured. This has been a fitful year full of challenges. Katrina pointed out many flaws in our preparedness. However,

while we all acknowledge that there is much left to do, we are better prepared than ever before.

The 2006 Public Transit Conference marks the 18th anniversary of the public transportation gathering. The first conference was more or less a gathering to review new annual applications procedures. The conference has grown into something unique.

The Louisiana Public Transit Association (LPTA) has been an integral part of the conference for many years. The LPTA was first formed in 1989 and has since been an ever-present part of transit in Louisiana's public transportation society.

The mission of the Louisiana Public Transportation Association is to promote and educate the people of Louisiana about public transportation, its importance to the state, and issues facing the transit industry within Louisiana. LPTA serves as the collective voice of Louisiana public transportation for information and issues of statewide, national and local concern for its members. The LPTA takes an active part in the legislative process through the debate over the Highway Trust Fund and continues to work with the DOTD PT in planning the annual conference.

The joint partnership of the LPTA and the DOTD PT provides an essential forum for professionals to share in the public transportation experience. We look forward to seeing each of you at this year's conference. 

One of the DOTD PT Section's mandates is to provide information and technical assistance



to transit providers in Louisiana to assist them in meeting their requirements for FTA funding. These activities come in many different formats and venues. DOTD PT provides numerous training courses, workshops, and training material as well as a web site and annual conference. To keep all of our constituents up to date on DOTD PT's activities, DOTD On The Go features just a few selected items each quarter.


#### **Carol Cranshaw**

##### **DOTD Manager of the Quarter**

Carol Cranshaw, Administrator of the Department of Transportation and Development's Public Transportation Section was named 'Manager of the Quarter' in August by DOTD Secretary Johnny B. Bradberry.

Col. Thomas F. Atkinson, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary of Intermodal Transportation, nominated Carol for the award. There was a small gathering to congratulate Carol at the DOTD Airport facility where the Public Transportation offices are located.

Col. Atkinson said that Carol has definitely gone the extra mile in the past year and deserved recognition for her accomplishments and leadership ability.

True to form, Carol said, "I owe everything that we achieve to my staff. Without them, I would not be able to accomplish anything." 

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impact; and 3) challenges facing the program. To develop the report, the GAO conducted research; interviewed federal, state and local officials; and surveyed 35 of the 37 transit agencies affected by the SSO. The report generated three specific recommendations: 1) the FTA should set performance goals for the program and develop a plan for maintaining the stated schedule of auditing oversight agencies; 2) the FTA should develop and encourage completion of a recommended training curriculum for oversight agency staff; and 3) the DHS should direct the TSA to coordinate their security oversight activities and audits with FTA and other agencies involved in the process. FTA and TSA have acknowledged and generally agree with the GAO recommendations and are currently considering how to pursue implementation.

#### **Recommendation Number One**

According to the GAO report, there are no real measures of effectiveness associated with the program. Although there is general support for the program and it is believed to be worthwhile by those involved and affected, FTA's methods for obtaining information on transit safety and security do not include performance measures and related program goals. Also, the FTA's audit schedule

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#### **Contact Information Announcement**

In our attempt to keep everyone informed of special events, workshops, conferences, and important information regarding public transportation in Louisiana, DOTD PT maintains a Contact Database. If information about your organization - new phone number, new director, new address or email - has changed, please help us keep our database current. Email your updated information to [publictransportation@dotd.louisiana.gov](mailto:publictransportation@dotd.louisiana.gov)

Thanks for your Help!

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has been frequently interrupted by current events.

In response to the above issues, FTA has committed to developing performance measures by the end of fiscal year 2006 and has committed itself to a timely audit and oversight schedule.

**In 2003, the DOTD PT began working on a Statewide Bus Safety Standard and was the first state in the nation to submit for FTA review and later adopt a statewide standard.**

### **Recommendation Number Two**

Again, while the program is viewed by most in the industry as worthwhile, the range of expertise varies widely across agencies. Once a state oversight agency is designated, FTA provides no funding for the program. Therefore, the level of expertise varies widely; one state reports that oversight personnel will have five years experience and another has one individual designated with competing collateral duties.

FTA currently provides technical assistance but no specific training courses or funding.

### **Recommendation Number Three**


The TSA is the lead agency on security matters and has regulatory authority over security activities in transportation including rail. However, the TSA has no formally defined role in FTA's new SSO program. Many in the industry are concerned with duplication of effort since both SSO agencies and TSA review and comment on transit systems' security plans.

FTA and TSA have both acknowledged and are addressing the overlapping responsibilities.

### **SSO in Louisiana**

The Department of Transportation and Development Public Transporta-


tion (DOTD PT) section, like all other SSO agencies, submitted revisions to their SSO plans in May 2006. Also, like all other SSO agencies, they are currently addressing comments regarding those plans.

In addition to the above activities, DOTD PT is currently providing assistance to the one rail transit agency operating in Louisiana, the New Orleans Regional Transit Agency (NORTA). According to the new SSO rules FTA published in 2005, all rail transit agencies were to submit new rail safety, security and emergency preparedness plans to the SSO. The DOTD PT has been working hand-in-hand with NORTA to ensure that rail transit in New Orleans meets the new FTA rules and provides safe and secure rail transit access to the traveling public. 



## **From Capital Hill...**

A report titled, "Detour Ahead: Critical Vulnerabilities in America's Rail and Mass Transit Security Programs" was released by U.S. Congressman Bennie G. Thompson, the ranking member of the U.S. House of Representatives' Homeland Security Committee. The report was prepared by the Democratic staff of the Committee on Homeland Security. The report examines the potential vulnerabilities of America's rail and mass transit security programs and draws on some of the information published in the Government Accountability Office study on the same subject, which is the lead article in this edition of Transitions Newsletter.

A complete copy of the report can be found at:  
[http://trb.org/news/blurb\\_detail.asp?id=6433](http://trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=6433) 

# *Announcing the* **2006 Louisiana Public Transit Conference**

Please join us at our annual Public Transit Conference. This is the yearly gathering of transit professionals who are dedicated to providing or supporting public transit in Louisiana. Attendees include public transit providers, transit associations, planners, transit advocates, consultants, vendors, and civic and religious leaders. Come participate in the rebirth of the Big Easy.

## *Location*

**September 25-27, 2006  
Wyndham New Orleans @ Canal Place  
100 Rue Iberville  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
Phone: (504) 553-5015**



## *Hotel Reservations*

Rooms are no longer available at the conference hotel. However, call the Wyndham New Orleans at (504) 553-5015 for information on other hotel options. Be sure and tell the hotel you are attending the Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development Conference.

## *For additional information*

Please contact the DOTD PT Section at  
225-274-4302 or  
go to our website at  
[www.dotd.louisiana.gov/intermodal/transit/](http://www.dotd.louisiana.gov/intermodal/transit/)